

DC **ADVENTURES**

HEROES & VILLAINS: VOL. 1



ALLIES AND ENEMIES FROM THE **DC** **UNIVERSE**

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HEROES & VILLAINS: VOL. 1

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WHY ARE SOME OF THESE ENTRIES GREEN?

The characters listed in green text denote a character whose power point total is correct for a character of that power level. For example, Adam Strange (see page 11) is a PL10 super hero who costs 150 power points, just as Bolt (see page 80) is a PL11 super-villain who costs 165 points.



“Legacy.” Remember that word. We’re going to get back to it in a bit.

You hold in your hands a roleplaying sourcebook over 75 years in the making. *Action Comics* #1, the first appearance of Superman, the first super hero, was published in 1938.

Now, you could argue that many RPG’s draw from much older source material. But no other genre draws from a body of work that seems as if it were designed *from the ground up* as a massive crowdsourced RPG book. “Hey...” one might say if one were Steve Kenson, or rather some sort of uber-Kenson floating on the Mobius Chair adrift in the Void, “... I want to design a super-hero game and populate it with iconic characters. But I’m going to need 75 years of the smartest writers, most visually arresting artists, and razor-sharp editors to forge this Monstrous Story Engine.” What one would design, then, through subtle manipulation of the timestream, is DC Comics. Because DC comic books are not just comic books, they are a *living legacy*.

75 years of character designs. Those characters then taken for a spin by 75 years of other players (writers) in different stories, testing them out, seeing what powers were interesting, what needed juicing, and what needed nerfing. Creators like Siegel and Shuster, Jack Kirby, Gardner Fox, Robert Kanigher, Denny O’Neil, Grant Morrison, Alan Moore and Mark Waid coming up with cliffhangers, plot twists, character vices and virtues. So many characters, it took more than one universe to contain them! First a universe, then a multiverse! (then just one universe again, then back to a multiverse, I think...)

And your playtesters, the people who said “I like this, this works, this doesn’t, this guy is lame ...” Your playtesters are the *millions* of people who read the books over the course of those years. Market response, then letters to the editor, feedback on the internet—all those people’s opinions went into the book you now hold in your hand.

Or, to put it more simply: Characters in books, novels, and short stories never change. But Superman used to jump instead of fly, and Batman once had a Bat-Hound. That’s a living legacy.

To be fair, I miss Ace the Bat-Hound.

“Legacy” in this sense doesn’t mean some dead collection of heroes. It means a living, vibrant, pulpy playground. When Keith Giffen, Cully Hamner and I created the new Blue Beetle in 2006, we were extending the life of a character that had existed since 1939. We updated him, gave him a new design, new powers, new problems, but we built on the legacy of the last 75 years of stories, from Golden Age Dan Garrett (see page 72) to Silver Age Ted Kord (see page 73) to our modern-era Jaime Reyes (see page 75).

What’s the value of using that legacy? Well, Jaime Reyes is a kid in an armored suit. The Blue Beetle is a hero who has been trained by Batman, mentored by Superman, beaten up by Green Lantern and gets the magic-user Traci 13 as his girlfriend. At the same time, he faces challenges unique to him, combats brand new foes, and interacts with the DC Universe in ways no other character quite could.

So go play. Pit the best of your imagination against the best of an entire universe. Break these heroes and villains, bend them, draw from them and, this is the cool part, add to them. Join the greatest heroes who ever lived, and show ‘em what you’ve got.

—John Rogers

John Rogers is a screenwriter and gamer who has also performed as a stand-up comic, and written for television, film, comic books and animated series. He created the TV show LEVERAGE, about a group of PL6 thieves who rob from the rich and give to the poor.



